Cost of repair and maintenance of Mirage 2000

1884. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the cost of service ability of Mirage 2000 has increased considerably; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to completely indigenise repair and maintenance of the aircraft?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir. The increase in general terms is attributed to variation in exchange rate of French France vis-a-vis Indian Rupee and the normal rate of escalation, as provided for in the Mirage Contract. The increase in cost noticed during the past two years is due to some major modifications required on Mirage engines and repair of major avionics.

(b) Overhaul of Mirage 2000 aircraft is presently done at HAL (BC) and facilities for overhaul of aeroengines have also been set up at 4 BRD, AF. As a result major element of repair/overhaul is being done indigenously. All out efforts are being made to indigenise the aircraft spares.

Gifting of INS Vikrant

1885. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to gift INS Vikrant to Government of Maharashtra free of cost for converting it into a museum; and

(b) if so, by when actual handing over is going to take place?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) A proposal received from the Government of Maharashtra for condoning Rs. 18.00 crores, being the scrap value of INS Vikrant, the decommissioned Aircraft Carrier of Indian Navy, and its conversion into a maritime museum has been agreed to. Further action in this regard is to be taken by Government of Maharashtra. The ship can be handed over by Indian Navy to Maharashtra Government as soon as Government of Maharashtra is ready to receive her.

Low capacity utilisation of Ordnance Factories

1886. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Ordnance Factories under the DGOF/Ordnance Factories Board have not been utilising their installed capacities to the maximum;

(b) whether the private sector has been taking out the works at a higher cost causing losses to the nation and potentialities of employment resources;

(c) the details of each factory working under OFB with percentage of capacity utilisation during the past two years;

(d) whether Government would now direct the units to work with maximum capacity utilisation; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (e) Ordnance Factories provide a dedicated production base to Indian Defence Forces to meet their requirements of lethal and non-lethal stores. The extent of